A QUALITY ROMANCE PUBLICATION

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SCHOOL FOR LONELINESS

A MEMORY OF LOVE

THEY CALLED ME DIFFERENT

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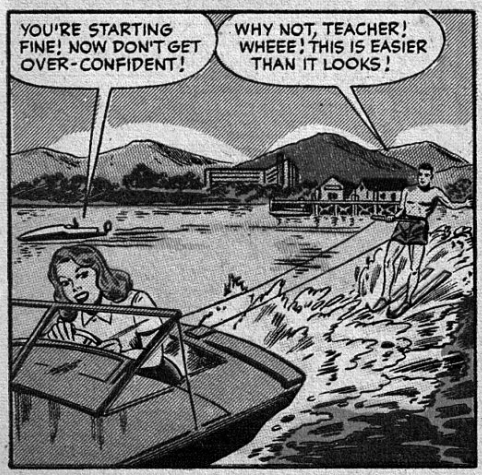
WHEN DAD DIED, ABOUT ALL HE LEFT WAS HIS SPEEDBOAT! I USED IT TO OPEN A LITTLE SCHOOL FOR WATER SKIING TO HELP MY KID SISTER, NAN, FINISH COLLEGE! THEN NAN CAME HOME, BEAUTIFUL AND GLAMOROUS! I WANTED HER TO FIND THE RIGHT MAN, SO I WORKED HARDER THAN EVER! I WAS TOO BUSY FOR ROMANCE, MYSELF... EVEN WHEN HANDSOME DON EASTLY STIRRED MY HUNGRY HEART WITH LONGING! I HAD TO GO ON SLAVING WHILE I WATCHED NAN TURN MY SCHOOL FOR WATER SKIING INTO A...

School For Loneliness

CLARASOTA BAY WAS THE WINTER RESORT OF WEALTHY TOURISTS! THEY WERE THE ONES WHO PATRONIZED MY LITTLE WATER SKIING SCHOOL TO LEARN THAT EXCITING SPORT!
WATER SKI SCHOOL
AS LONG AS I LIVE I WILL NEVER FORGET THE DAY I MET DON EASTLY! IT WAS TOO EARLY IN THE MORNING FOR STUDENTS...
HEY, BUD! WHERE CAN I FIND THE BOSS OF THIS SCHOOL?
RIGHT HERE!
PULP: EXCUSE ME, MISS! I...I THOUGHT YOU WERE A MAN!
I'M NOT SURPRISED! YOU CAN'T OVERHAUL A MARINE ENGINE AND LOOK GLAMOROUS, TOO! I'M GAIL WARNER!
IT'S QUITE A TRICK, BUT I BELIEVE YOU COULD PULL IT OFF! ER...COULD YOU TEACH ME TO WATER SKI?
NOT IN THAT OUTFIT, MR. EASTLY! GET INTO SWIM TRUNKS AND COME BACK IN AN HOUR IF YOU'D LIKE A LESSON!
IT'S A DEAL! SAY, YOU HAVE A NICE SPOT HERE! DON'T TELL ME YOU RUN IT ALL BY YOURSELF?
I'M AFRAID SO! I TEACH, OVERHAUL ENGINES, SCRAPE BARNACLES AND DODGE BILL COLLECTORS! IT'S A GREAT LIFE!
WATER SKI SCHOOL
IT MUST BE! DOESN'T YOUR... ER...HUSBAND HELP YOU RUN THE SCHOOL?
I HAVE NO HUSBAND! SINCE DAD DIED I'VE BEEN TOO BUSY KEEPING MY KID SISTER, NAN, IN COLLEGE TO EVEN HAVE DATES!
SOMETHING OUGHT TO BE DONE ABOUT A CRIME LIKE THAT! I'LL SEE YOU IN AN HOUR...GAIL!
I'LL HAVE THE BOAT READY AND MY FACE WASHED...DON!
2

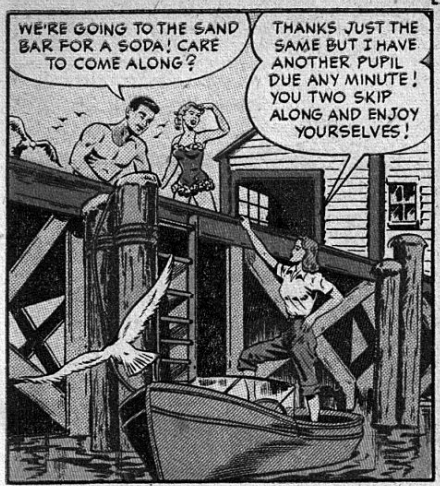
WHEN DON ARRIVED I TOLD MY LEAPING HEART TO BE STILL AND FORCED MYSELF TO BE CURT AND BUSINESS-LIKE!



I COULD SWIM LIKE A FISH BUT I DIDN'T TRY WHEN I FELT DON'S STRONG ARM GRAB ME FIRMLY! ALL I WANTED WAS TO STAY IN THAT COMFORTING CIRCLE!

I INTRODUCED DON AND SAW HIS EYES LIGHT UP WITH APPRECIATION OF MY LITTLE SISTER'S SHINING BEAUTY AND CHARM!

NAN USUALLY SLEPT LATE, BUT THE NEXT MORNING SHE WAS UP AND OUT IN HER LOVELIEST BATHING SUIT WHEN DON CAME FOR HIS LESSON!



THE DAYS FELL INTO A PATTERN OF DULL ANGUISH! EACH DAY DON TOOK ANOTHER LESSON HE NO LONGER NEEDED--- BUT I NEEDED THE MONEY DESPERATELY!

NAN WAS OUT LATE EVERY NIGHT! SLOWLY MY AGONY BECAME A DULL STEADY THROB! ONE NIGHT I AWOKE WHEN NAN CAME IN EXTRA LATE!

YOU'RE SO LATE, NAN, AND YOU LOOK SO MYSTERIOUS AND EXCITED! DID--- DID SOMETHING SPECIAL HAPPEN?

OH---N-NO, GAIL! IT'S JUST--- JUST THAT I HAD SUCH A GOOD TIME, IS ALL! GO BACK TO SLEEP, SIS! I'M SORRY I DISTURBED YOU!

THE NEXT DAY THEY DIDN'T TRY ANY FANCY SKIING! INSTEAD THEY STAYED CLOSE TOGETHER, WHISPERING THROUGH THE WHOLE LESSON HOUR!

WHY DID I SACRIFICE MY HAPPINESS? IF ONLY I HAD TOLD NAN THE TRUTH THAT FIRST DAY, SHE WOULDN'T HAVE CAPTURED DON'S HEART! HE *DID* LIKE ME A LOT!

I DIDN'T SEE THEM AGAIN AFTER THE LESSON! BUT WHEN I GOT IN AFTER THE LAST PUPIL HAD FINISHED---

A NOTE---IN NAN'S HANDWRITING! OH---OH! I'M AFRAID TO READ IT!

Gail

BUT READ IT I DID, THROUGH TEAR-FILLED EYES, WHILE THE WORDS BURNED THEMSELVES INTO MY HEART!

Gail Darling,
Forgive me but I'm eloping. By the time you see this I'll be married and you'll be free to live again. See you after the wedding. Nan

THEY'VE ELOPED! THEY'RE MARRIED NOW AND IT'S ALL OVER! NOW I'M F-FREE---AND THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO BE FREE FOR!

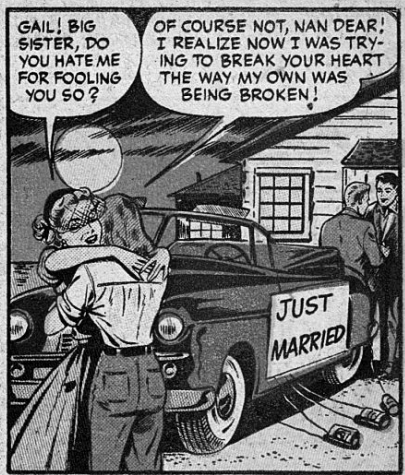
OH, DON, DON, HOW CAN I GO ON WITHOUT YOU?

A BETTER QUESTION IS--- *WHY* SHOULD YOU GO ON WITHOUT ME?

IT COULDN'T BE TRUE! I THOUGHT I WAS HAVING A NIGHT-MARE--- A MAD DREAM BUILT OUT OF HOPELESS LONGINGS!

DON! WHA---? HOW---? BUT--- BUT NAN WROTE THAT SHE'D BE MARRIED BY THE TIME I READ HER NOTE!

AND SHE PROBABLY IS, I HOPE! BUT NOT TO ME GAIL---TO JERRY MERCER! THEY'VE BEEN IN LOVE ALL THROUGH COLLEGE!



SUDDENLY DON'S ARM WAS AROUND ME, STRONG AND SECURE, AND ALL THE TORMENTS OF THE PAST WEEKS WERE DISSOLVED IN JOY!

TO MOST PEOPLE, THE FREAKS IN A SIDESHOW ARE JUST PART OF THE DAY'S ENTERTAINMENT AT A CIRCUS! THOUGH I LOVED THEM BOTH DEARLY, MY PARENTS WERE BILLED AS THE FAT LADY AND THE LIVING SKELETON ON O'BRIEN'S MIGHTY MIDWAY! SO I RAN AWAY FROM LOVE, TERRIFIED OF THE SCORN THAT WOULD DESTROY MY ROMANCE ONCE LONNIE SHAW LEARNED WHY...

THEY CALLED ME Different

GO AHEAD AND LAUGH! ¦SOB¦ NOW YOU KNOW WHY I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO MEET MY PARENTS! ¦SOB¦ THEY'RE FREAKS IN A SIDESHOW!

STOP THAT, AVA! YOU'RE HURTING THE THREE PEOPLE IN THE WORLD WHO LOVE YOU MOST!

DIA BER N

LIVING SKELETON FAT LADY

I FIRST BEGAN TO REALIZE THAT I WAS "DIFFERENT" WHEN MY PARENTS SENT ME TO VALLEYDALE SCHOOL FOR GIRLS!

MY DAD'S PRESIDENT OF THE INSURANCE EXCHANGE BACK HOME! WHAT DOES YOUR FATHER DO, BEVERLY?

OH, HE'S RETIRED! HE AND MOTHER SPEND MOST OF THEIR TIME TRAVELING, NOW!

ER.. YOUR PARENTS TRAVEL QUITE A BIT, TOO, DON'T THEY, AVA? I NOTICE YOU GET LETTERS FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY!

YES.. YES, THEY DO!

I CAN'T TELL THEM THAT MOM AND POP TRAVEL WITH A FREAK SHOW! THEY'D EITHER LAUGH OR.. FEEL SORRY FOR ME!

THANK GOODNESS THE GIRLS NEVER ASKED TOO MANY QUESTIONS ABOUT MY FAMILY! AT LEAST I'M ACCEPTED AS ONE OF THEM AND I'M NOT BEING RIDICULED BEHIND MY BACK!

I WAS SURE NO ONE KNEW MY SECRET! BUT ONE EVENING...

LOOK, KIDS! I'M THE GUY WHO TIES HIMSELF IN KNOTS! HA! HA!

HURRY, HURRY, HURRY! SEE THE FAT LADY, ONLY TEN CENTS, THE TENTH PART OF A DOLLAR!

IMAGINE BEING BROUGHT UP WITH THOSE HORRIBLE PEOPLE? IT'S FUNNY, AVA SEEMED PERFECTLY NORMAL WHEN SHE CAME HERE!

YES, BUT WHO WANTS ANYTHING TO DO WITH A FAMILY OF FREAKS? I'M SURPRISED THEY ALLOWED HER IN AN EXCLUSIVE SCHOOL LIKE THIS!

OH, THEY PROBABLY EARN FAIRLY GOOD MONEY! I WOULDN'T DREAM OF LETTING AVA KNOW I SAW THOSE PICTURES IN HER DRAWER! SHE'D PROBABLY SIC THE WILD MAN OF BORNEO ON ME!

HA! HA! SURE! HE MIGHT BE A CLOSE RELATIVE! WAIT UNTIL I TELL THE OTHER GIRLS!

BEVERLY PRETENDED TO BE MY FRIEND! AND THEN SHE SNOOPED IN MY PERSONAL BELONGINGS AND.. OH, HOW CAN THEY BE CRUEL?

DISILLUSIONED AND SICK WITH SHAME, I LEFT SCHOOL!

WHY DO I HAVE TO BE ASHAMED OF MY FOLKS? IF I HAD A NORMAL FAMILY LIFE LIKE OTHER GIRLS, I COULD HAVE FRIENDS.. I MIGHT EVEN FIND SOMEONE WHO'D LOVE ME!

VALLEYDAL SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

LATER THAT DAY, EXHAUSTED FROM MY LONG WALK..

YEAH, I GUESS WE COULD USE A WAITRESS! YOU GOT ANY EXPERIENCE, SISTER?

NO, BUT I **KNOW** I'D DO A GOOD JOB! PLEASE, I..I'VE GOT TO HAVE WORK!

SO-HI CLUB

YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE A MEAL, TOO, HONEY! COME ON, LET'S SEE WHAT'S DOING IN THE KITCHEN! AND YOU'D BETTER HAVE A JOB FOR THIS KID, JOE, IF YOU WANT A FLOOR SHOW TONIGHT!

OKAY, SO SHE'S HIRED! THIS IS LONNIE SHAW SISTER... THE M.C. WITH A BOY SCOUT COMPLEX!

IT WAS JUST A SECOND-RATE CLUB, BUT IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, LONNIE SHAW MADE IT SEEM LIKE PARADISE!

I DIDN'T TELL LONNIE THAT I HAD LEARNED ACROBATICS FROM EXPERTS ON A CIRCUS LOT! IT WAS THRILLING ENOUGH TO CHANGE MY UNIFORM FOR A COSTUME!

AND AFTER THE SHOW THAT NIGHT!

IT WAS TRUE! SOMEONE LOVED ME, AND ALL MY LONGING FOR AFFECTION, ALL THE GRATITUDE IN MY HEART WENT INTO THAT KISS!

LONNIE WANTED TO MARRY ME! I SHOULD HAVE BEEN GLORIOUSLY HAPPY, BUT THE NEXT NIGHT!

LONNIE'S REALLY WILD ABOUT YOU! HE TOLD ME HE CAN'T WAIT TO MEET YOUR FOLKS AND GET THEIR APPROVAL! I GUESS HE'S AFRAID YOU WON'T MARRY HIM BECAUSE YOUR FAMILY IS PREJUDICED AGAINST SHOW PEOPLE!

HE'LL HAVE TO MEET THEM SOMEDAY! AND HE'LL HATE ME FOR NOT TELLING HIM THEY'RE... FREAKS!

I CAN'T EXPECT HIM TO UNDERSTAND! AND I COULDN'T BEAR IT IF HE LAUGHED ..OR FELT SORRY FOR ME, LIKE THE GIRLS AT THE SCHOOL! IT'LL BE BETTER IF I BREAK AWAY FROM HIM BEFORE HE LEARNS THE TRUTH!

SO THAT NIGHT!

THE CIRCUS IS IN MINNEAPOLIS THIS WEEK AND THAT'S WHERE I BELONG! I'LL TRY TO FORGET LONNIE, AND WITH MY PEOPLE I WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT HAVING MY HEART BROKEN! AT LEAST THEY UNDERSTAND!

THEATRICAL WEEKLY

DEAREST LONNIE, PLEASE FORGIVE ME FOR RUNNING AWAY, BUT IT'S FOR THE BEST! I KNOW WE COULD NEVER BE HAPPY TOGETHER AND I ONLY WISH I COULD TELL YOU WHY!

I'll always be grateful! what you did for me will always be in my memory ... my memory of the happy hours I spent with you!

Yours with all my love,

Ava

I WAS HOME TWO DAYS LATER, BACK WITH THE PEOPLE WHO UNDERSTOOD THE HEARTBREAK OF BEING "DIFFERENT"! BUT THOUGH I TRIED, I COULDN'T ERASE THE MEMORY OF LONNIE'S KISSES!

DAD AND I WERE FRANTIC WHEN OUR LETTER WAS RETURNED FROM THE SCHOOL! AND WHEN WE PHONED AND THEY SAID YOU HAD RUN AWAY, WE WERE TERRIBLY WORRIED, DEAR!

I WASN'T HAPPY, THERE, MOM! I ... TRIED WORKING FOR A WHILE, TOO, BUT I GOT LONESOME FOR YOU!

ONCE A TROUPER, ALWAYS A TROUPER! THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE FOR YOU, AVA!

YES, HERE WITH THE CIRCUS FREAKS! OH, LONNIE, I WANTED YOUR LOVE SO DESPERATELY! I CAN'T FORGET YOU.. ... I CAN'T!

TWO DESOLATE WEEKS WENT BY! AND THEN, ONE AFTERNOON, IN ANOTHER MIDWESTERN CITY!

LONNIE OH, NO! NO, I MUSTN'T LET HIM SEE ME!

AVA! AVA, WAIT! I'VE BEEN LOOKING ALL OVER FOR YOU!

I SAW THAT THEATRICAL MAGAZINE IN YOUR DRESSING ROOM WITH A CIRCLE AROUND THE CIRCUS SCHEDULE! IT WAS A WILD HUNCH, BUT I FOUND YOU! OH, AVA, DARLING, WHY DID YOU RUN AWAY?

I.. EXPLAINED THAT, DIDN'T I? WE WOULDN'T HAVE MADE A GO OF IT!

MY... DAD OWNS THIS CIRCUS, BUT HE HAS BIGGER PLANS FOR ME THAN MARRYING A NIGHT CLUB PERFORMER! I'M GOING BACK TO SCHOOL AND..

DON'T AVA! PLEASE DON'T LIE! YOU SEE, I.. I'VE ALREADY MET YOUR PARENTS!

THEN WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT? {SOB} AREN'T YOU SATISFIED? CAN'T YOU SEE WHY I LIED TO YOU? {SOB} GO ON AND LAUGH.. THAT'S WHAT EVERYBODY ELSE DOES!

AVA, LISTEN TO ME! YOU'VE GOT ME ALL WRONG, HONEY!

I LEFT LONNIE STANDING THERE, AFRAID TO TURN AROUND BECAUSE I KNEW WHAT I WOULD SEE!

MAYBE HE ISN'T LAUGHING, BUT HIS SYMPATHY IS EVEN WORSE! I NEVER WANT TO SEE HIM AGAIN!

MOTHER AND DAD! THEY'RE TO BLAME FOR THIS! WHY DIDN'T THEY SEND ME AWAY YEARS AGO, WHILE I STILL HAD A CHANCE TO LIVE LIKE OTHER PEOPLE! COULDN'T THEY SEE WHAT THEY WERE DOING TO ME?

NUMBED BY MY SOBS, I WAITED UNTIL I WAS SURE LONNIE HAD GONE OUT OF MY LIFE FOREVER! BUT AS I CREPT BACK TO THE TRAILER I CALLED HOME!

I KNOW WHY SHE RAN AWAY! SHE'S ASHAMED OF US, DAD! {SOB} SHE'S ASHAMED .. AND HOW CAN WE BLAME HER?

MOM! SHE... SHE'S CRYING!

YOU'RE WRONG, MRS. VERNON! AVA ADORES YOU BOTH! WHY.. SHE USED TO TALK ABOUT YOU ALL THE TIME!

LONNIE! HE.. HE DIDN'T LEAVE! HE'S LYING SO THEY WON'T BE HURT!

AVA.. TALKED ABOUT *US?* BUT I THOUGHT SHE RAN AWAY FROM YOU BECAUSE SHE WAS AFRAID OF WHAT YOU'D THINK AFTER YOU CAME HERE!

DON'T BE SILLY! WE JUST HAD A LITTLE LOVER'S QUARREL AND SHE WAS UPSET! IT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU!

WE'D RATHER DIE THAN HURT HER, SON! SHE'S OUR ONLY ... AVA!

HI! I ...I SEE YOU'VE ALREADY MET LONNIE, FOLKS! I KNEW YOU'D HIT IT OFF WELL TOGETHER!

WE WERE AFRAID YOU DIDN'T WANT HIM TO MEET US, DEAR! BUT LONNIE TALKED US OUT OF THAT SILLY IDEA!

NOT WANT HIM TO MEET YOU? WHY NOT? YOU'RE WONDERFUL PEOPLE AND I'M PROUD OF YOU!

BUT

TEARS OF GRATITUDE SPRANG INTO MOM'S EYES AS I KISSED HER, AND I KNEW THEN HOW MUCH MY PARENTS HAD SUFFERED AND HOW DESPERATELY THEY NEEDED MY LOVE! LATER, WHEN WE WERE ALONE, I TOLD LONNIE WHAT WAS IN MY HEART!

IF YOU HADN'T LIED SO GALLANTLY, THEY'D HAVE BEEN MISERABLE! AND I WAS ASHAMED OF THEM WHEN I SHOULD HAVE BEEN PROUD!

YOU'VE GOT EVERY RIGHT TO BE PROUD, AVA! YES! THEY ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH!

AND YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN AN OLD SHOWMAN LIKE ME WOULDN'T JUDGE PEOPLE BY OUTSIDE APPEARANCES! I'M CRAZY ABOUT YOUR FOLKS, DARLING! IF FOR NO OTHER REASON, THEN JUST BECAUSE THEY GAVE ME YOU!

OH, LONNIE! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN YOU'D UNDERSTAND! AND I LOVE YOU FOR IT.. MORE THAN EVER!

LONNIE'S KISS TOLD ME HE LOVED ME, BUT MORE THAN THAT! IT REVEALED THAT THERE WAS ROOM IN HIS HEART FOR THE TWO PEOPLE WHO WANTED MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE TO SEE ME HAPPY, DESPITE THE TRAGEDY OF THEIR LIVES!

IF YOU HAD ASKED ANYONE IN LAKEWOOD TO NAME THE MOST HAPPILY ENGAGED COUPLE, THEY'D HAVE SAID, "ROD WALKER AND GLORIA HALLARD!" BECAUSE WE **WERE** GLORIOUSLY HAPPY, EVEN IF AT TIMES IT SEEMED THAT THE THRILL HAD GONE OUT OF OUR KISSES AND WE HAD STARTED TO TAKE OUR LOVE FOR GRANTED! WHY THEN, DID I DESTROY EVERYTHING IN A RECKLESS DETERMINATION TO WIN A STRANGER'S AFFECTION? FOR I HURT NOT ONLY MYSELF, BUT MY TWO DEAREST FRIENDS JUST BECAUSE I SOUGHT..

TOO MANY BOYFRIENDS

BUT CLARK SAID HE LOVED ME! I BROKE MY ENGAGEMENT WITH ROD BECAUSE I BELIEVED THAT!

IT USED TO BE A WONDERFUL THRILL JUST TO WALK DOWN THE STREET WITH ROD!

I CAN JUST HEAR WHAT THEY'RE SAYING, DARLING! WONDERING HOW I RATE SOMEBODY AS HANDSOME AS YOU!

KEEP TALKING, GLORIA! A FELLOW COULD LISTEN TO THAT SORT OF THING FOREVER! BUT OF COURSE I'D HAVE TO START BUYING LARGER HATS!

I'M NOT WORRIED, ROD! NOTHING COULD CHANGE YOU! YOU'RE EVERYTHING A GIRL COULD WANT IN THE MAN SHE'S GOING TO MARRY!

SWEET! THAT MAKES REASON FIVE MILLION NINE THOUSAND SIXTY FOUR WHY I LOVE YOU SO MUCH!

GLORIA.. GLORIA.. I'M MAD ABOUT YOU!

ROD'S WONDERFUL! WHY DON'T I FEEL THRILLED AND EXCITED WHEN HE KISSES ME THIS WAY?

I DIDN'T WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT MY LACK OF ARDOR! AND BECAUSE I WAS APPARENTLY LUCKY IN LOVE, MY BEST FRIEND, NAN JEFFERS, TURNED TO ME FOR ADVICE ONE DAY!
YOU AND ROD ARE SO PERFECT FOR EACH OTHER, GLORIA! MAYBE YOU COULD HELP ME TO A LITTLE HAPPINESS BY DOING ME A BIG FAVOR!
YOU NAME IT, NAN! ANYTHING SHORT OF GIVING UP ROD!
IT'S CLARK BRISTON! HE'S AN AUTO SALESMAN AT ROD'S AGENCY! YOU'VE PROBABLY MET HIM!
NO, BUT I'VE HEARD ROD MENTION HIS NAME! WHAT ABOUT HIM, NAN?
I MET HIM ONCE AT A PARTY! HE DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE ME THEN AND HE HASN'T IN THE TIMES I'VE RUN INTO HIM SINCE THAT NIGHT! BUT.. THIS SOUNDS CRAZY, GLORIA ... I'M IN LOVE WITH HIM! I CAN'T SLEEP NIGHTS THINKING ABOUT CLARK!
ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS BRING YOU TWO TOGETHER! LET ME TALK TO ROD ABOUT IT!
OH, DON'T WORRY! ROD WON'T GIVE AWAY YOUR SECRET! WE'LL ARRANGE A DINNER OR A DOUBLE-DATE AND LET YOU TAKE IT FROM THERE!
YOU'RE A HONEY, GLORIA! I KNEW YOU'D WANT TO SEE ME AS HAPPY AS YOU ARE WITH ROD!
ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT MY NEW MATCH-MAKING PROJECT, I ENLISTED ROD'S HELP THE NEXT DAY!
SURE I'LL COOPERATE, DARLING! BUT WE DON'T WANT TO BE TOO OBVIOUS! IF WE FIX CLARK AND NAN UP WITH A DATE, WE'RE LIABLE TO SCARE HIM OFF!
MAYBE WE COULD GET TO KNOW CLARK BETTER OURSELVES!
THAT'S WHAT I MEAN! WE'LL ASK HIM OVER TO YOUR PLACE A FEW TIMES, GO OUT WITH HIM ALONE ONCE OR TWICE AND THEN PULL NAN INTO THE PICTURE! IT'LL ALL SEEM CASUAL AND UNPLANNED!
YOU SCHEMER! YOU'RE WORSE THAN I AM!
WHY NOT? I LIKE TO SEE PEOPLE FALL IN LOVE! IT'S THE BEST THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TO ME!
NAN'S A LOVELY GIRL! I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT CLARK BRISTON, BUT IF HE'S A TYPICAL MALE, HE'S BOUND TO LIKE NAN!

CLARK WAS MORE THAN JUST THE "TYPICAL MALE"! I KNEW THAT THE INSTANT ROD USHERED HIM INTO MY HOME A FEW DAYS LATER!

I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BATCH IT, CLARK! YOU MISS OUT ON ALL THOSE TERRIFIC HOME-COOKED MEALS!

ROD KEEPS TELLING ME HE'S GOING TO MARRY A PRIZE HOMEMAKER! ANYWAY, IT'S MIGHTY NICE OF YOU TO ASK ME TO DINNER, GLORIA!

NONSENSE! ROD AND I ARE LIKE OLD MARRIED PEOPLE.. WE ENJOY HAVING SOMEONE ELSE TO TALK TO!

I DON'T BELIEVE THAT! NOBODY COULD EVER GROW TIRED OF BEING ALONE WITH YOU!

CLARK'S DASHING GOOD LOOKS AND THE WAY HE KEPT LOOKING AT ME HAD MY HEART RACING WILDLY!

WATCH OUT FOR TRAPS LIKE THIS, CLARK! A GIRL SENDS HER FOLKS TO THE MOVIES, FIXES YOU UP WITH FRIED CHICKEN AND APPLE PIE, AND BANG! YOU'RE A GONE GOOSE!

NO WONDER NAN IS SO WILD ABOUT HIM! IF I WASN'T ENGAGED I'D GO FOR HIM MYSELF!

AND IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS!

YOU'RE SURE YOU WANT ME TO TAG ALONG? I THOUGHT AFTER BEING STUCK WITH ME OVER THE WEEK-END, YOU'D WANT TO BE ALONE!

ONE OF THESE DAYS, HE'LL FIND HIMSELF A GIRLFRIEND AND HE'LL GET OVER THAT FIFTH WHEEL COMPLEX, RIGHT, HONEY?

ROD WAS COMPLETELY UNAWARE OF THE ATTRACTION WE SEEMED TO HAVE FOR EACH OTHER, BUT EACH TIME I SAW CLARK AFTER THAT I FELT LESS ABLE TO RESIST THE UNEXPLAINABLE HOLD HE HAD OVER ME!

WE'RE CERTAINLY SHOWING HIM THE ADVANTAGE OF BEING IN LOVE, AREN'T WE? HOW ABOUT SPRINGING OUR LITTLE TRAP ONE OF THESE DAYS?

ER... NOT JUST YET, ROD! I DON'T WANT TO RUSH THINGS AND SPOIL IT FOR NAN!

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO THANK YOU, GLORIA! YOU'VE BEEN MAKING WONDERFUL PROGRESS WITH CLARK!

YES, WE... WE'VE GOTTEN TO BE GOOD FRIENDS! IT WON'T BE LONG NOW!

BON TON

COULDN'T I "ACCIDENTLY" DROP OVER TONIGHT? YOU SAID HE WAS COMING ALONG WITH ROD TO WATCH TELEVISION, DIDN'T YOU?

ER.. WAIT A LITTLE LONGER, NAN! WE WANT TO BE SURE WE HAVE CLARK IN THE RIGHT FRAME OF MIND!

I'VE BEEN MAKING PROGRESS WITH HIM ALL RIGHT! FOR MYSELF!

AND FINALLY I HAD TO ADMIT TO MYSELF THAT I DIDN'T WANT NAN TO MEET CLARK BRISTON! I DIDN'T WANT ANY WOMAN TO WIN HIS LOVE BECAUSE I LOVED HIM MYSELF!

I WISH I COULD BE ALONE WITH HIM .. REALLY ALONE! I'M SURE CLARK FEELS THIS WAY ABOUT ME, TOO!

AND ONE EVENING!

HELLO, CLARK! ROD ASKED ME TO MEET HIM HERE WHEN I FINISHED SHOPPING! IS HE BUSY NOW?

BUSY IS A MILD WORD FOR IT! THAT CAB COMPANY IN PAYSONVILLE IS CONSIDERING BUYING FOUR NEW CARS FOR TAXIS! HE'S OUT DEMONSTRATING OUR NEW MODEL FOR THE OWNER!

WILL HE BE BACK?

NOT FOR A WHILE! HE ASKED ME TO DRIVE YOU HOME AND TO TELL YOU HE'S SORRY ABOUT YOUR DINNER DATE! ALL RIGHT WITH YOU?

IT WAS MORE THAN ALL RIGHT ... IT WAS EXACTLY WHAT I HAD BEEN HOPING FOR! AND SOMEHOW IT SEEMED INEVITABLE THAT CLARK WOULD STOP THE CAR ON THAT LONELY ROAD AND TAKE ME IN HIS ARMS!

CLARK .. DON'T! WE HAVEN'T THE RIGHT!

MAYBE NOT, BUT WE HAVE THE REASON! LET'S NOT TORTURE OURSELVES ANY LONGER, GLORIA!

I WAS IN LOVE WITH YOU FROM THE VERY BEGINNING! NOT THAT I DIDN'T FIGHT AGAINST IT, DARLING! BUT I GET CLOSE TO YOU LIKE THIS AND I'M HELPLESS!

OH... CLARK.. YOU DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH I WANTED TO BE IN YOUR ARMS!

AS CLARK AND I KISSED I KNEW I WAS IN LOVE WITH HIM! HOW WILL I TELL ROD? THAT QUESTION KEPT BEATING AT MY MIND WITH EVERY HEART-BEAT!

IT WON'T BE EASY, CLARK.. TELLING ROD THAT WE'RE IN LOVE!

DON'T TELL HIM YET, SWEETHEART! WE'LL FIND A WAY TO BREAK THE NEWS GENTLY ONE OF THESE DAYS AND MEANWHILE... THIS IS OUR SECRET, HMM?

BUT THE NEXT EVENING!

ROD'S ANGRY DEPARTURE WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF MY TORMENT! DAYS WENT BY WITHOUT A WORD FROM CLARK!

I DON'T DARE PHONE HIM AT THE AGENCY! HE MAY HAVE QUARRELED WITH ROD... MIGHT NOT EVEN BE WORKING THERE! BUT I'VE GOT TO KNOW WHY CLARK HASN'T COME TO SEE ME!

AND ONE NIGHT!

DEAREST CLARK, I KNOW YOU WANT TO BE DISCREET, BUT I'M SO MISERABLE WITHOUT YOU! I KNOW I SHOULD HAVE WAITED TO TELL ROD THAT WE LOVE EACH OTHER, BUT I HAD TO BE HONEST WITH HIM!

But no matter what happens, nothing matters now except being in each other's arms again! Please call me, darling! Your own, Gloria

ASHAMED TO FACE NAN, I CAREFULLY AVOIDED HER SINCE MY BREAKUP WITH ROD! BUT AS I WALKED TO THE MAILBOX WITH MY LETTER, I FORGOT ABOUT HER! AND AS I PASSED NAN'S HOME...

CLARK!

WELL! IF IT ISN'T THE ONE-WOMAN MATRIMONIAL AGENCY!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, NAN?.. I SEE YOU'VE MANAGED TO MEET CLARK!

THANKS TO ROD! AT LEAST **SOME** PEOPLE KEEP THEIR PROMISES! AT LEAST REAL **FRIENDS** DO!

BUT YOU... YOU SAID YOU WERE IN LOVE WITH ME, CLARK! I BROKE MY ENGAGEMENT BECAUSE I BELIEVED THAT!

I KNEW THAT WAS JUST A TEMPORARY THING FOR BOTH OF US! THAT WAS WHY I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO TELL ROD!

I'M NOT SAYING I DID THE RIGHT THING! BUT YOUR SCENE WITH ROD NEARLY COST ME MY JOB, NOT TO MENTION ROD'S FRIENDSHIP! IT'S A GOOD THING HE UNDERSTOOD WHEN I TOLD HIM THE TRUTH!

HE FORGAVE YOU! BUT HE DIDN'T FORGIVE **ME!**

SUDDENLY MY WHOLE WORLD LAY SHATTERED BEFORE ME! AND BECAUSE I HAD TO BLAME SOMEONE ELSE FOR MY HUMILIATION, MY THOUGHTS TURNED TO ROD!

BUT AS I HURRIED HOME!

FAT LEGS!

Try this new, amazing, scientific home method to Reduce Ankles, Calves, Thighs, Knees, Hips for

SLENDERIZED LEGS

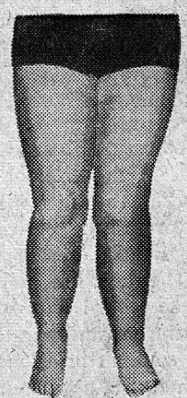
How "Around-the-Clock" Glamour Legs Help Everything You Do!

DANCE GRACEFULLY—Slenderized, firmer legs help you become a desirable dance partner, allow you to do the latest dance steps more gracefully.

WORK WITH PEP—By removing excess flabbiness and strengthening legs you will lessen fatigue when your job or housework keeps you on your feet.

• IMPROVE YOUR FAVORITE SPORT—Well-formed legs not only are attractive but also help you play tennis, swim, bowl, etc., with more ease and form—which men admire.

• WALK, STAND WITH POISE—Your carriage and poise thru your entire figure will be improved and more graceful with the aid of beautifully shaped legs.



In Many Cases, Doctors Advise Use of This Technique

Men notice your legs first! Heavy flabby legs can make a woman feel self-conscious, look older and heavier than she is. Beautifully firm, slenderized legs help the rest of your figure look slimmer, more appealing! Give yourself a chance to look good in the latest fashions of higher skirts, bathing suits, shorts, etc. Now at last, you too can try to help yourself, to improve heavy legs, due to normal causes, as many women have by following this new scientific method. You should try to do something about reducing and reshaping ANY PART of your legs you wish . . . such as streamlining bulging hips into more youthful lines . . . trimming down flabby thighs into a bewitching contour . . . acquiring feminine appeal in place of ugly knees . . . fat calves into more slenderized alluring curves . . . heavy ankles into more sleek graceful lines . . . or your legs all over!

Clothes Look Unattractive With Heavy Legs!

On fat flabby legs, hose haven't any appeal . . . all dresses, suits, skirts seem to fit clumsily . . . even expensive shoes look unstylish, ungraceful and poor fitting. Fat legs make your entire appearance look heavier, more matronly.

Clothes Look Glamorous With Shapely Legs!

Whether sitting or standing, shapely legs are the foundation of feminine loveliness. Sheer hose, all shoes, dresses, skirts, look and fit their best over well formed hips, thighs, knees, calves, ankles.

Tested and Proven Method Requires Only 15 Minutes A Day

Well-known authority on legs with years of experience offers you this tested and proven scientific course—only 15 minutes a day—in the privacy of your home! Contains step-by-step illustrations of the easy scientific leg technique with simple instruction for slenderized, firmer, stronger legs; improving skin color and circulation of blood in legs; also normal causes of heavy legs, plus leg measurement chart of each section of leg according to height and weight.

From the very FIRST DAY you may feel the exhilarating effects of this method

Remember, the average reducing plan, pills, etc., usually result in general weight reduction only—which DOES NOT concentrate on any one part of the body you wish. This amazing method was perfected to concentrate on each part of your legs, from the hips down.

Read How This Technique Helped Others!

One young lady, age 25, accumulated surplus fat—especially around her hips, thighs, and legs. She regained the normal graceful curves in her hips and legs which had attracted her husband. Another woman gained a more attractive appearance by reducing the size of the contour of her hips and legs.

Written About in Health Culture Magazine!

Health Culture asked this well-known authority on legs to write a series of articles on the fundamentals of this method. This magazine believed their readers should learn about this wonderful technique. Many other leading magazines and newspapers have written about the priceless advantages of correct leg development.

SEND NO MONEY! FREE 10-DAY TRIAL!

You would be glad to pay any price to gain slenderized legs, but "Home Method for Slenderizing Heavy Legs" is yours for the low introductory price of only $1.98 complete. Just deposit $1.98 plus postage with postman on delivery (in plain wrapper). Or send only $1.98 with order and we pay postage. You must see satisfactory results, or return course and your money will be refunded.

MODERN METHODS Dept. SL-64B16
296 Broadway New York City 7

TARGET For Love

MOST of my friends were engaged or married by the time they were twenty-three, and as a result, they all did their best to line up what they considered to be suitable dates for me. Everybody seemed bound and determined that I was to find a husband. The fact that I had yet to meet the man I wanted to spend the rest of my life with, made me wonder if such a man existed. And I guess I was doubtful that the real love everyone took for granted would ever come to me.

"Really, Peggy, you are so casual about it," complained my best friend, Myra. "Now Ed has a new man in his office. I've met him and . . ." "Please, Myra," I protested. "Deliver me from any more of these delightful 'new men' from your husband's office. They're all so, well, quite frankly . . . dull." She looked hurt for the moment, probably thinking me an ungrateful wretch. But somehow I couldn't bring myself to agree to being thrown at the "new man."

However, the following Wednesday, when I arrived at Myra's for a quiet evening with the girls, I was introduced to Jim Ferguson. I was instantly annoyed when Myra greeted me at the door and I heard the men talking in the background. She detected it, but didn't give me a chance to say anything. She swept me into the room for the introduction. I know I was rather cool, but I couldn't overcome my anger at being put on the block again. The evening progressed slowly and I was sure the tall, good-looking Jim Ferguson was just as annoyed as I was by the arranged evening. So I made excuses to leave early. Myra glared daggers at me, Ed looked relieved and Jim offered to drive me home. I declined, saying I had my dad's car and left shortly afterwards.

Imagine my surprise when I stopped in front of my apartment building to find Jim Ferguson leaning against the entrance. "It's still early Peg," he smiled most charmingly. "Maybe we can locate a cup of coffee at a restaurant and complain to each other about match-making friends." He laughed as he spoke and in spite of myself, I joined in. Minutes later we were sitting across from each other over coffee, talking as though we had been friends for years. "Actually, you needn't blame your friend, Myra, too much for this," he explained as we discussed the evening. "I had seen you downtown when I was with Ed a few weeks ago and he told me who you were. I asked to meet you." I looked at him gratefully. It was such a relief to meet someone who wanted to know me and hadn't been selected by one of my friends.

Neither Jim nor I told Myra and Ed that we ever saw each other after leaving them that night. So they were surprised when Jim and I dropped in three months later and I showed them my engagement ring. "Peggy!" shrieked Myra, astounded, and at first a little put out that she hadn't known about it. Jim teased her about playing cupid and of course she was delighted. And I'm delighted, too. I know at last that I've found the man with whom I want to spend the rest of my life!

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FOR THE BEST IN A QUALITY ROMANCE PUBLICATION ROMANCE COMICS

Love Confessions
Girls In Love
Love Secrets

Heart Throbs
Wedding Bells

Love Letters
Brides Romances
Exotic Romances

IT WAS A GREAT SHOCK TO ME TO DISCOVER THAT SOME PEOPLE HURT OTHERS FOR THE PERVERSE PLEASURE IT GIVES THEM! BUT I LEARNED THIS TOO LATE AND WAS COMPLETELY UNPREPARED WHEN MY COUSIN STOLE THE MAN I ADORED AND LEFT ME WITH ONLY ...

a Memory of Love

A LETTER FROM MY COUSIN DEBBIE STATING THAT SHE WAS COMING TO NEW YORK TO LIVE, BROUGHT BACK TO ME MY FIRST LONELY AND UNHAPPY DAYS IN THE CITY! IT SEEMED ONLY RIGHT THAT I SHOULD MEET HER AT THE STATION AND TRY TO MAKE HER FIRST WEEKS EASIER!

MY HOME HAD BEEN ABOUT FIFTY MILES FROM DEBBIE'S AND WE HAD SEEN ONE ANOTHER ONLY INFREQUENTLY OVER THE YEARS! BUT I FELT A CLOSE KINSHIP TO HER AS I HELPED ACQUAINT HER WITH NEW YORK MANNERS, STYLES AND IDEAS!

THAT LOOKS LOVELY ON YOU, MISS!

IF THE BOYS BACK HOME COULD ONLY SEE ME NOW! I'LL TAKE IT!

THEY'RE SO EXPENSIVE, PEGGY..! BUT I'VE GOT TO HAVE THEM!

I'LL PAY FOR THEM, DEBBIE! YOU CAN RETURN THE MONEY WHEN YOU GET A JOB!

IT'S A LITTLE EXTREME, DEB.. BUT IT'S CERTAINLY GLAMOROUS!

THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO BE.. GLAMOROUS! IF SOMEONE FROM HOME WERE TO WALK UP TO ME, I'D WANT THEM TO JUST STAND AND GAPE!

DEBBIE TOOK TO THE CITY AND ITS WAYS LIKE A DUCK TO WATER! BUT THERE WERE THINGS ABOUT HER WHICH DISTURBED ME.. THINGS WHICH I ATTRIBUTED TO HER STRANGENESS AND NAIVETE AND TRIED TO OVERLOOK! AND THEN I ASKED MY BOY FRIEND, HAL CORVALLE, TO ARRANGE A DOUBLE-DATE!

HELLO, HONEY! THIS IS STEVE JENKINS, MAN'S GIFT TO WOMANHOOD.. BUT HE DOESN'T ADMIT IT!

HI, HAL! STEVE THIS IS MY COUSIN, DEBBIE JONES!

WHERE ARE WE GOING? I'M DYING TO GET OUT OF THIS MORBID APARTMENT!

I KNOW A GREAT PLACE... VERY INTIMATE AND ROMANTIC!

HAL TOOK US TO A SMALL CLUB IN GREENWICH VILLAGE!

I'M A LITTLE CONFUSED, PEG! I THOUGHT HAL WAS YOUR DATE.. OR ARE YOU JUST TRING TO GET RID OF HIM?

OF COURSE NOT, STEVE! WE'RE ALL FRIENDS..! THERE'S NO REASON WHY WE CAN'T DANCE WITH ONE ANOTHER!

I DON'T KNOW IF STEVE WAS TRYING TO SPARE MY FEELINGS OR WAS ENTIRELY UNPERCEPTIVE! BUT IT WAS OBVIOUS TO ME THAT DEBBIE HAD THROWN HERSELF AT HAL!.. AND HE SEEMED NOT AT ALL UNWILLING TO CATCH HER!

IF THAT'S THE CASE! MAY I HAVE THIS DANCE?

OF COURSE, STEVE!

STEVE WAS EASY TO TALK TO... AND DANCE WITH! EVERYTHING HE DID AND SAID WAS DONE SIMPLY AND STRAIGHT-FORWARDLY, WITHOUT ANY ATTEMPT TO DECEIVE OR IMPRESS!

SO DEBBIE'S ONLY BEEN IN NEW YORK FIVE WEEKS... AND YOU'VE BEEN HERE TWO YEARS! I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT IT WAS THE OTHER WAY AROUND!

WHY DO YOU SAY THAT, STEVE?

I DON'T THINK I'D BETTER SAY! I'M PROBABLY ALL WRONG! LET'S DROP DEBBIE AND TALK ABOUT YOU!

THERE'S SO LITTLE TO SAY! I'M SURE YOU'D MAKE A MORE INTERESTING SUBJECT!

I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED THAT STEVE'S WORDS WERE MEANT AS A WARNING... BUT I DIDN'T! IN THE FOLLOWING WEEKS HAL CALLED ONLY ONCE... TO SAY THAT HE WAS VERY BUSY! AND DEBBIE BEGAN GOING OUT BY HERSELF! THEN... LATE ONE NIGHT!

THAT'S HAL'S CAR...! AND DEBBIE!

AND A FEW MOMENTS LATER!

IT... IT WAS HAL YOU WERE OUT WITH TONIGHT!

YES, IT WAS HAL! YOU MIGHT AS WELL KNOW... HE'S IN LOVE WITH ME! I'M SORRY, BUT THAT'S THE WAY IT IS!

HE.. HE'S IN LOVE WITH YOU? HE'S A VERY NICE BOY, DEBBIE... ARE YOU IN LOVE WITH HIM?

MAYBE! BUT DON'T BE SO NOBLE ABOUT IT! AFTER ALL, I DID TAKE HIM AWAY FROM YOU!

DEBBIE'S WORDS WERE MEANT TO GOAD ME, HURT ME.. .. BUT I DIDN'T REALIZE IT THEN! INSTEAD, I FELT THAT SHE WAS EXPRESSING A FEELING OF GUILT, WHICH, TO MY MIND, SHE HAD NO REASON TO HAVE!

BUT HAL WAS NEVER ANYTHING MORE THAN A FRIEND TO ME, DEBBIE! I'M NOT BEING NOBLE! IF YOU TWO ARE IN LOVE, I'M VERY GLAD!

I HATE THAT PHONY GOODNESS OF YOURS! I KNOW YOU HATE ME, AND I'M GOING TO MOVE!

YOU'RE DRAMATIZING THIS, DEBBIE! THERE'S NO REASON FOR YOU TO LEAVE! BESIDES ON YOUR PAY, YOU COULDN'T AFFORD AN APARTMENT!

ALL RIGHT! IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU WANT IT, I'LL STAY!

ALTHOUGH DEBBIE CONTRIBUTED NOTHING TOWARD THE UPKEEP OF THE APARTMENT, SHE MADE IT SOUND AS IF SHE WERE DOING ME A FAVOR! BUT AGAIN THE IMPLICATION OF HER WORDS ESCAPED ME! A FEW DAYS LATER, AS I LEFT THE OFFICE FOR LUNCH...
STEVE! HOW HAVE YOU BEEN? ARE YOU WAITING FOR SOMEONE?
YES! YOU! I THOUGHT PERHAPS WE COULD HAVE LUNCH TOGETHER!
I'D LOVE THAT... BUT WHY DIDN'T YOU PHONE?
I WANTED TO GIVE IT A MORE PERSONAL TOUCH! AND MAKE IT LIGHT AND GAY! HAL TELLS ME YOU KNOW ABOUT HIM AND DEBBIE!
YES! ISN'T IT WONDERFUL! THEY MAKE A NICE COUPLE!
I KNEW YOU'D SAY THAT! BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW WONDERFUL IT IS FOR HAL! ANYWAY, NOW I CAN SEE YOU WITHOUT FEELING I'M STABBING HIM IN THE BACK!
FOR SOME REASON, STEVE DISLIKED DEBBIE, BUT FOR THE MOST PART HE KEPT HIS REASONS TO HIMSELF AND I DIDN'T ASK FOR ANY EXPLANATIONS! DIDN'T ASK DURING THE MANY DATES WE HAD OVER THE SUCCEEDING WEEKS BECAUSE I WAS TOO HAPPY!
DID YOU ENJOY YOURSELF, TONIGHT, PEG?
AS ALWAYS, STEVE! I HAD A MARVELOUS TIME!
I WANT IT ALWAYS TO BE THAT WAY, HONEY!
I THINK IT WILL BE, STEVE... WITH YOU!
IT WASN'T OUR FIRST KISS .. BUT IT WAS ONE I WOULD NEVER FORGET! AS OUR LIPS CLUNG TOGETHER IN THAT BREATHLESS AWAKENING WHICH IS THE REALIZATION OF LOVE, I WANTED THIS MOMENT TO LAST FOREVER!
DARLING!
OH.. STEVE!
I'VE LOVED YOU SINCE THE FIRST MOMENT I SAW YOU!
IT WASN'T QUITE THAT FAST WITH ME, STEVE! BUT NOW, I'LL NEVER STOP LOVING YOU! OF THAT, I'M SURE!

IN MY NEW AND RHAPSODIC LOVE, IT SEEMED THAT NOTHING COULD INTRUDE ON MY HAPPINESS! BUT DEBBIES NAME WAS OFTEN ON STEVE'S LIPS!

DEBBIE'S REALLY GOT HAL UP IN THE AIR! HE'S CRAZY ABOUT HER ... AND SEEMS TO THINK SHE'S PLAYING HIM FAST AND LOOSE!

I KNOW SHE'S GOING OUT WITH LOTS OF BOYS, BUT SHE'LL CALM DOWN! SHE STILL HASN'T GOTTEN OVER BEING IN LOVE WITH NEW YORK!

WELL ... I HOPE IT'S AS SIMPLE AS THAT! BUT I'VE AN IDEA SHE'S NOT QUITE AS SIMPLE OR AS INNOCENT AS YOU SEEM TO THINK!

YOU'RE IMAGINING THINGS, DARLING!

BUT YOU'RE NOT IMAGINING THIS!

NO, DARLING ... THIS IS REAL.

LATER THAT WEEK I WAS FORCED TO REMAIN LATE AT THE OFFICE! WHEN STEVE ARRIVED, I WAS FAR FROM BEING READY AND LEFT HIM AND DEBBIE, WHO WAS WAITING FOR HAL, TALKING IN THE LIVINGROOM! BUT I FINISHED DRESSING SOONER THAN THEY EXPECTED! WHAT I SAW CAUSED MY HEART TO STAND STILL!

DON'T YOU THINK YOU OUGHT TO TELL PEG? AFTER ALL, SHE HAS BEEN A WONDERFUL FRIEND TO YOU! AND WHAT ABOUT HAL?

FORGET ABOUT THEM! THEY CAN KEEP EACH OTHER COMPANY! BUT LET'S LEAVE BEFORE EITHER OF THEM WALKS IN!

I'VE BEEN CRAZY ABOUT YOU SINCE I FIRST MET YOU, DARLING! WE CAN EXPLAIN LATER!

I DIDN'T WAIT TO HEAR ANOTHER WORD! TOO STUNNED TO CRY OR EVEN THINK, I STUMBLED BACK INTO MY ROOM AND FELL IN A NUMBED HEAP ON MY BED! SOON THE DOOR SLAMMED AND ALL WAS QUIET! BUT THE DOORBELL SOUNDED A FEW MINUTES LATER ...!

HI, PEG! IS DEBBIE ---? PEG, WHAT'S THE MATTER?

THEY ... STEVE AND DEBBIE ... THEY WENT OUT TOGETHER --! THEY'RE IN LOVE ...!

THEY ..? WHY, THAT TRAMP! SHE DOESN'T LOVE HIM! SHE LOVES ONLY DEBBIE JONES! SHE'S NO GOOD! THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT HER THAT MAKES HER WANT TO HURT PEOPLE!

THAT MAKES HER ... WANT TO HURT PEOPLE?

HAL LEFT IN A FURY, AND THE SOUND OF THE DOOR SLAMMING RELEASED IN ME A FLOOD OF PENT-UP TEARS! DEBBIE'S DECEIT, ARROGANCE, HATEFULNESS WAS NOW OBVIOUS TO ME! BUT IT WASN'T FOR THIS THAT I CRIED!

STEVE... SOB... I LOVED YOU SO! AND I WAS SO SURE... SOB... YOU LOVED ME!

BUT IT... WASN'T... SOB... ALL DEBBIE'S DOING! SHE COULDN'T HAVE TAKEN YOU FROM ME... UNLESS YOU WANTED TO BE TAKEN!

AN HOUR LATER, THE SOUND OF THE DOORBELL MADE ME RISE AND DRY MY EYES...

HELLO, DARL...! DARLING, YOU'VE BEEN CRYING! WHAT'S HAPPENED?

STEVE... SOB... HOW COULD YOU COME BACK! I SAW THAT SCENE BETWEEN YOU AND DEBBIE!

SCENE...! BUT HONEY... DIDN'T YOU READ MY NOTE?

YOUR... YOUR NOTE?

STEVE QUICKLY OPENED A NOTE WHICH LAY IN PLAIN VIEW ON THE TABLE, BUT WHICH, IN MY DESPAIR, I HADN'T NOTICED! I COULD HARDLY BELIEVE WHAT I READ...

Dearest... attending to a little business as Princess Debbie which should have been done a long time ago! Be back in an hour. Love me until then as I love you! Steve

DARLING, I PLAYED ALONG WITH HER WHEN SHE MADE HER PASS, AND LET HER THINK WHAT I KNEW SHE WOULD! NAMELY, THAT I WAS SMITTEN BY HER CHARMS!

BUT YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN HER FACE WHEN I BOUGHT HER A ONE-WAY TICKET TO CARTERSVILLE! SHE WAS SO MORTIFIED, SHE GOT ON THE TRAIN WITHOUT SAYING A WORD! I TOLD HER YOU WOULD SEND HER LUGGAGE ON TO HER!

OH.. STEVE...!

YOUR GOODNESS IS ONE OF THE MANY THINGS ABOUT YOU I LOVE! BUT IT'S A WEAKNESS, TOO! IT MAKES YOU BLIND TO THE BAD IN OTHERS!

THAT'S ALL RIGHT, DARLING! I KNOW YOU'LL NEVER BE BAD TO ME!

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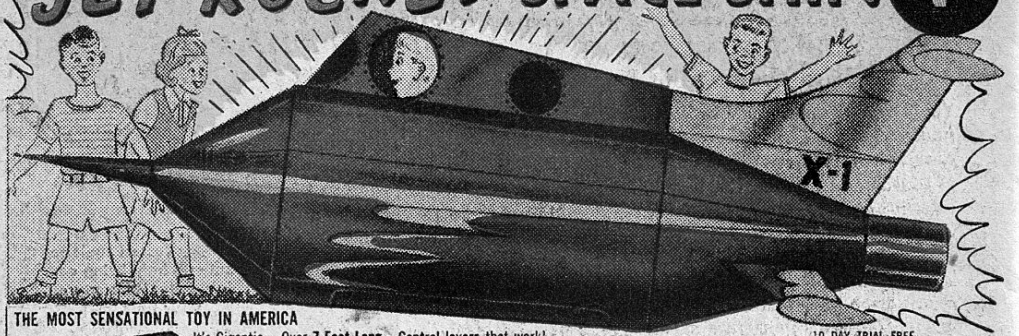

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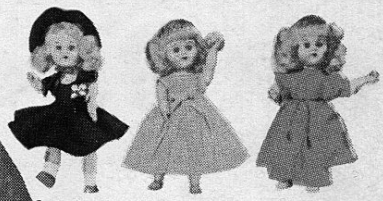

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